

several minutes giving us excellent views at about 30 m range. They had black bills and blackish legs. All had a black band extending through the eye to the nape, but there was no streaking on the crown. The black band varied in width in individual birds. All appeared to be in adult plumage. They were identified as Black-naped Terns *Sterna sumatrana*. During the next hour they were seen several more times, flying just beyond the shoreline, and giving an impression at times of miniature Crab Plovers *Dromas ardeola*.

The species breeds on several western Indian Ocean islands including Astove, the Amirantes and Aldabra (Penny 1974) and although there are no previous records of this species from East Africa, it has occurred as a vagrant in South Africa (Natal) and southern Mozambique (Clancey 1980).

### References

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### Notes on the breeding behaviour of the Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus* in Somalia

The following observations were made on the west bank of the Webbi Shabelle about 25 km south of the town of Beledweyne, Somalia, at approximately 4°33'N, 45°17'E. The area is characterized by two rainy seasons, in April–May and October–November, and is generally hot and dry with only c. 250 mm of rain per year. The vegetation along this part of the river is dominated by large *Acacia tortilis* and *A. nilotica* trees, with some *Ficus* sp. and *Hyphaene* sp., and thickets of *Salvadora persica* and *Balanites rotundifolia*.

On 26 April 1984, an adult Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus* was observed excavating a hole in the underside of a dead branch of a large living *Acacia tortilis* tree. At the time the hole was perhaps 1 cm deep. On a later visit it was found that the hole had never been completed.

Ten months later, on the morning of 25 February 1985, a nest was located in the underside of another branch of the same tree. This branch was a broken dead stub about 5.5 m above the ground. Attention was called to the nest by the quiet but repeated 'tinking' of what sounded like at least two young birds. A few hours later the tree was visited again, and a young tinkerbird was found on the ground below the hole. Its body feathers were complete except for the head, which was still partly bare, with no evidence of the characteristic red forehead of the adult. The wing and tail feathers were nearly fully grown, with only the primaries still showing a bit of the sheath. The bird appeared to be healthy when found, but was never seen to be approached by an adult, and was dead by nightfall.

The next morning only one young bird was heard calling from the nest hole, and at least one adult was seen entering and leaving. The following day the nesting tree was visited again, but no sound was heard from the nest hole; instead, the fledgling was located by its call about 1.25 m up in a dense clump of *Salvadora persica*, about 18 m away. It called regularly and was seen to regurgitate a large very sticky white seed, which it wiped off its bill on to the branch on which it was perched. Its plumage was identical to that of



its sibling found on the ground two days before, with no sign of the red forehead. An hour and a half later the fledgling was gone, but a second, slightly larger, pale yellow and orange seed was found stuck on the branch next to the white seed which had been regurgitated earlier. The fact that this bird fledged on 25 February indicates that egg-laying must have occurred sometime during the second half of January, in the middle of the dry season.

On 13 April 1985, an adult tinkerbird was seen enlarging, or perhaps cleaning, the same nest hole. The site was not visited again until 5 June when what sounded like two young birds were heard calling from the same hole. These young birds were never seen, but an adult bird was observed in the entrance hole. The bird was watched for c. 15 min, during which it occasionally disappeared into the hole for a few seconds, and then reappeared in the entrance. It was observed to regurgitate several greyish seeds, and accepted some fairly large orange fruits from a second adult. Egg-laying in this case must have occurred sometime in mid-May, during the second half of the rainy season.

Short and Horne, in Fry *et al.* 1988, mention that the Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* may raise several consecutive broods in the same season using the same hole, and that the Moustached Green Tinkerbird *P. leucomystax* occasionally raises two broods a year with two months between broods. But to the best of my knowledge *P. pusillus* has not previously been recorded breeding twice in the same year. In this case the two broods must have been started about four months apart, with one raised in the dry season and the other in the following rainy season.

I would like to thank Dr Lester Short for reading an earlier draft of this note.

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#### Blue Swallows *Hirundo atrocaerulea* near Busia: the second record for Kenya

On the morning of 22 August 1988, the author investigated a small area of scrub and rank grassland by a stream 2 km east of Mungatsi (0°28'N, 34°19'E) on the Mumias–Busia road in western Kenya. An all dark swallow flying low over the grass proved to be wholly shiny blue with tail streamers nearly as long as the body, and was clearly a Blue Swallow *Hirundo atrocaerulea*. A search of the area revealed more birds of this species in other small patches of grassland, but never more than three together, although a total of eight to ten was suspected. The birds were watched skimming low over the ground and resting on tall grass stems. At one point, two birds seemed to be displaying in flight, one—a male?—fluttering over the other with tail streamers splayed. The following evening, the area was visited by D.A. Turner and D.A. Zimmerman, who found at least twelve Blue Swallows, apparently coming in to roost. On 24 August, further observations were made by A.D. Forbes-Watson and G.S. Keith. However, when the area was checked again on 19–20 September no birds could be found.

The Blue Swallow is known as a non-breeding visitor to Lake Victoria areas of Uganda. Britton (1980) gives its range in Kenya as Mumias, Busia and Bungoma, but this gives a false impression of previous properly documented records. Until now, the only





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